

ECHO IRELAND

Journal of the
Irish Radio Transmitters Society
March/April 2003



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The views expressed in Echo Ireland do not necessarily represent the views of the Society or the Editor

**Deadline for next edition
May 9th**

Calendar 2003

**Enniskillen Rally
April 6th**

**2 Metre Counties Contest
Monday April 21st**

**IRTS AGM
April 27th
Green Isle Hotel,
Naas Road, Dublin 22**

**International Marconi Day
April 26th**

**CW Field Day
June 7/8th**

**VHF/UHF Field Day
July 5/6th**

IRTS Field Day 1950



L - R: Tom Green EI9N, Jimmy Browne EI7M, Joe Mills EI8P, SWL...., Bob Staunton EI8Q, Kieran Williams EI7Y, Ian Clarke EI3Y, Michael Collins EI3N, Arthur Hobson EI3Q, Basil King EI5Y.

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**Irish Radio Transmitters Society
Annual General Meeting on Sunday April 27th at 1430
Green Isle Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22
Details on page 3.**

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Silent Key WB9KOY/EI7EG

Sadly I wish to report that Mike Murphy WB9KOY/EI7EG passed away on Sunday February 9th 2003 in Chicago after a week long respiratory illness.

Mike was originally from Carlow and returned to Ireland frequently with his wife and family.

In June 1989 he was part of the Limerick Radio Club team that went to the Aran Islands to operate EJ0A on Inisheer.

Mike was also often heard on the Sunday Irish Hour on 21.317 MHz.

Mike remained in close contact with his brother in law Michael Boyce EI2HA in Wexford on 15 and 20 meters throughout the sunspot cycles.

On a more personal note Mike helped my father to get his novice license in Chicago. I did accompany Mike on the 1989 trip to the Aran Islands and he acted as my "tour director". It was the chance of a lifetime and many a farmhouse door was opened to me. I was the only "yank" in the bunch.

Most on the Irish Hour know Mike. At one time he was president of the Hamfester's Radio Club (Chicago). I also went to Chicago FM Club meetings with him when I made return visits to Chicago.

He was still active in selling real estate part time.

73 and slán
Brian W7DFO

Packet Radio News

Saturday the 15th of February saw John EI8JA and Nicky EI3JB en route to Mt. Leinster to carry out some service work on the voice repeater.

They also took with them a 70 Cms folded dipole antenna donated by John EI3DIB in an experiment to try and put the WRC8 node back on air on 432.650. While this antenna is very small it was hoped it would provide usable working conditions between the EI3DIB BBS in Ardfinnan and the EI6EH Kells BBS and after 10 days in some very bad weather conditions, it has been providing even better signals than expected between both BBS's, with signals so far being equal to or better than before.

John would welcome any reports. Just send a packet message to EI3DIB @ EI3DIB.

Irish Radio Transmitters Society Annual General Meeting April 27th 2003 Green Isle Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22

Members are hereby notified that the Annual General Meeting of the Irish Radio Transmitters Society will be held at 1430 on Sunday April 27th 2003 at the Green Isle Hotel, Naas Road, Dublin 22.

Rule 23.1 requires that the committee shall, at least 28 days notice prior to the Annual General Meeting, send to all paid up members a list showing the nominees for the offices of President and Vice-President and eleven committee positions.

The following are the Committee's nominations;

President	Sean Donelan EI4GK
Vice-President	Sean Nolan EI7CD

Committee	
EI2GN	John Ketch
EI2HX	Pat Fitzpatrick
EI2JC	Noel Walsh
EI2JD	Thos Caffrey
EI3GV	Brendan De hOra
EI4HX	Peter Grant
EI5DI	Paul O'Kane
EI6JA	Stephen O'Leary
EI6JK	Mark Condon
EI7IS	Mark Wall
EI8JA	John McCarthy

The names of other members eligible and willing to serve as President, Vice-President or as Committee members shall be added to the list upon receipt of nominations in writing, by any ten paid-up ordinary members in the case of a nominee for the Presidency or Vice-Presidency, or by any two paid-up ordinary members in the case of a nominee for any of the eleven committee positions. (Rule 23.2)

See Page 26 of the current Year Book for all the rules relating to elections.

Trophies and Awards

Nominations for all trophies must be with the Awards Committee on or before April 5th

Construction Trophies

Entrants for the Construction Trophies must present their equipment to the Awards Committee before 12 noon on the day.

SWL Trophy

Entries for the Ian Morris Trophy must also be submitted before April 5th.

Enquiries to Sean Donelan EI4GK

**There will be no dinner dance or rally
associated with this year's AGM**

WORLD RADIO CONFERENCE 2003

A look at the main implications for amateurs in Geneva in June

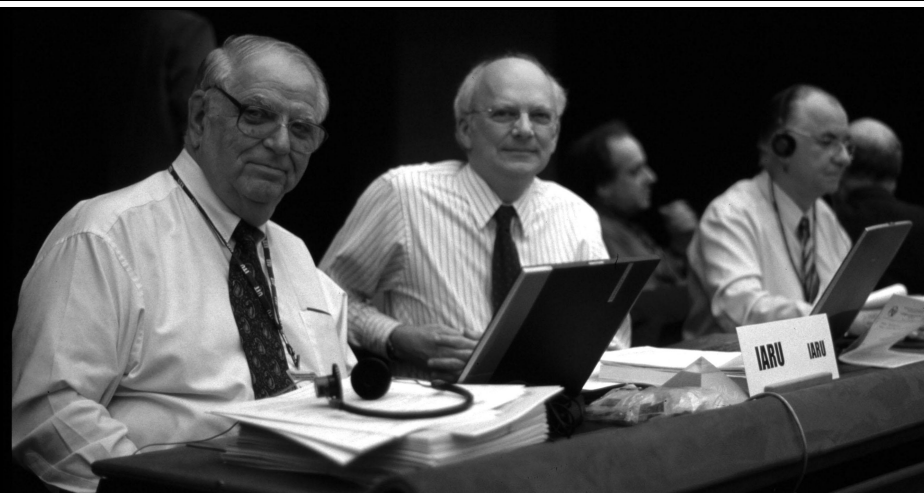
The upcoming WRC is a very important event for radio amateurs everywhere as it will determine the outcome of the longstanding campaign by the IARU and its member societies to secure an exclusive allocation of 300KHz in the 7MHz region on a worldwide basis. In addition the Conference will also consider amendments to Articles 25 and 19 of the International Telecommunications Union Radio Regulations which deal with the Amateur and Amateur Satellite Service and the Composition of Callsigns respectively.

The CEPT countries are in the final stages of agreeing European Common Proposals on these matters and the following tries to set down a summary of the present position with a little background information in relation to harmonisation of allocations around 7MHz.

7 MHz Position

A worldwide allocation to the amateur service of 7.0 to 7.3 MHz was first made at the ITU Conference in Washington in 1927 and was retained at the Madrid Conference in 1932. It was in 1938 that the Cairo Conference first introduced the concept of shared amateur and broadcast allocations in the 7.1 to 7.3 MHz segment outside the Americas. Further reductions in in amateur allocations in Regions 1 and 3 of the ITU took place at the Atlantic City Conference in 1947. The present allocations at 7 MHz were decided at the Geneva Conference in 1959. Throughout this period the Region 2 allocation has remained 7.0 to 7.3 MHz exclusive.

Attempts undertaken at WARC79 and WARC92 failed to solve the allocation problems around 7.0 MHz. Recommendation 718 at WARC92 referred the matter to a future competent world radiocommunications conference to consider the possibility of aligning the allocations to the amateur service around 7 MHz with due regard to the requirements of other services. This recommendation on the one hand recognised the desirability of having exclusive worldwide allocations to the amateur and broadcasting services around 7 MHz and on the other accepted that the sharing of frequency bands by these services is undesirable and accordingly should be



Preparing for WRC-03.

IARU representing amateur interests at the ITU conference preparatory meeting.
Larry Price W4RA, Dave Sumner K1ZZ and Wojciech Nietyksza SP5FM.

Photo John EI7BV

avoided. The matter has had to wait ten years and is now tabled as Item 1.23 of the WRC' 03 Agenda.

The CEPT European Common Proposals for WRC' 03 accept that the sharing of frequency bands by the amateur and broadcasting services on a regional or inter-regional basis is undesirable and should therefore be avoided. Most importantly, the CEPT countries also support a globally harmonised allocation of 300KHz to the amateur service, that could be partly shared with the fixed and land mobile services. While this is not the exclusive global amateur allocation which the IARU has been seeking, it may well be the best that can be achieved and represents a good compromise between those who might support the IARU view and those who would be less generous to amateurs than CEPT. The CEPT proposals do mean that over a period of time all broadcasting in the 7.0 to 7.3MHz segment would cease, amateurs would have the full 300KHz worldwide but shared with the fixed and land mobile services in Regions 1 and 3 of the ITU. Sharing with the latter services will be infinitely better than sharing with the broadcast service given that they use significantly less power and their operation would be less continuous than the broadcast stations. All of this will of course have to be phased in over a period of time. The broadcast service in Regions 1 and 3 (Europe and the world

outside the Americas) is allocated, on a primary basis, the segment 7.1 to 7.2 MHz up to April 2007 and the segment 7.2 to 7.3 MHz up to October 2009. CEPT has a two stage proposal on the following lines:

1 January 2005 to 1 April 2007

Administrations may allow amateur stations in Regions 1 and 3 to use the band 7.1 to 7.2 MHz on a secondary basis, subject to non interference with the broadcast service and to a total radiated power not exceeding 24 dBW (250 watts)

1 April 2007 to 25 October 2009

The segment 7.1 to 7.2 would be allocated to the amateur, fixed and land mobile services on a primary basis (this would give amateurs in Regions 1 and 3 the segment 7.0 to 7.1 MHz exclusive and 7.1 to 7.2 on a primary basis with the fixed and land mobile services)

After 25 October 2009

The primary allocation in the segment 7.2 to 7.3MHz to broadcasting will have ceased and it seems this segment will be allocated on a primary basis to the amateur, fixed and land mobile services. This would give a global 300KHz allocation to the amateur service which would be exclusive in Region 2 as at present and on a primary basis with the

Paddy Serridge EI6ID/GI0PED R.I.P.

A Tribute to a Friend.

Paddy Serridge EI6ID/GI0PED was a very well known radio amateur and was a friend to all those who had a QSO with him on radio.

He met many hams off air over the years while driving around EI and GI using the repeaters as he went along.

He loved to try out all the new models of radios when they came on the market.

He would buy or sell second hand radios to those amateurs who wanted a rig for HF or VHF at a good price. He was always on the lookout for a good deal.

As a member of Dundalk Amateur Radio Society and the Newry & Mourne Radio Club, he would give encouragement to all those who took up the hobby.

Paddy enjoyed the first QSO with new operators and made their first contact on the air a memorable one.

Paddy also gave his time and effort to the IRTS Committee over the years.

When in France on summer holidays he would talk back home on his Icom 706 on 14 MHz, with the Icom HF antenna on top of the campervan.

When not on radio one of his other pastimes was enjoying his grandchildren.

Most hams knew his special grandson Oran.

His first contact on amateur radio was his old friend Eugene Larkin EI3K (RIP).

Before CEPT, visitors to EI had to use a visitor's call sign. Paddy used the call-sign EI5VOL

Paddy also loved to play the Banjo and there were many all night singings in his home and on the many Field Day and Special Events Stations he attended.

Over the years Seamus GI4SZW, Brian MI1BIM, Paddy's sons Mark & Paddy Jr and myself put up many antennas at his



QTH.

Thank you Paddy for all the encouragement enjoyment and friendship you gave us all, you will be sadly missed .

Our sympathy to his wife Jan EI7IH/GI0VVC and her family on their sad loss.

Jim Daly EI970/MI3SBI

fixed and land mobile service in Regions 2 and 3

Article 25 of the Radio Regulations

The main item here is that the obligatory requirement for a knowledge of Morse code to obtain an amateur licence for the frequencies below 30Mhz will be removed from the ITU Regulations. The regulations will, however, state that it is a matter for administrations to decide, so this would allow some administrations to retain this requirement if they so wished

Administrations will, however be required to verify the operational and technical qualifications of any person wishing to operate an amateur station.

The IARU were proposing a stronger formulation with a specific reference to recommendation ITU-R M. 1544 relating to operational and technical qualifications. The obligatory requirement in the Cept proposals is stronger than in earlier drafts and is likely to be sufficient and to be acceptable to other administrations. Other matters of interest are:

- third party traffic will be specifically allowed in the case of emergencies and administrations are to be advised take steps to allow amateur stations to prepare for and meet communications needs in the event of a disaster.

- it is proposed that the term plain language be removed from the regulations as it is confusing nowadays as it does not cover the use of different digital codes and protocols.
- The section of the regulations where this is used will be a simpler text and it will allow administrations to authorise encoding of transmissions to meet a particular operational need such as disaster communications or the control of amateur satellites.
- maximum power levels, it is proposed by CEPT, will, for the future, be a matter for individual administrations.

Article 19 Identification of Stations

CEPT is proposing that this Article be amended to allow greater flexibility in relation to country identifiers and also to allow four trailing characters.

Call signs would then be either one or two letters followed by a single digit (other than 0 or 1) followed by a group of not more than four characters the last of which must be a letter.

For special occasions such as international or national championships, conferences, anniversaries, or celebrations administrations would be empowered to allow the temporary use of more than four trailing characters.

If the CEPT proposals find acceptance at

WRC' 03 they would, all in all, represent a satisfactory outcome to the IARU campaign over a lengthy period. The Society will be supporting the CEPT Common Proposals and will be forwarding a letter to that effect, before the end of March, to the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

Northern Ireland ARDF Championships

The Northern Ireland ARDF Championships will take place on Saturday 14th June 2003 at The Crawfordsburn Scout Centre, which is in County Down, between Belfast and Bangor.

To take part in this event you will need to build an 80m Amateur Radio Direction Finding ("ARDF" for short) receiver and use it on the day.

More details will be available later - You have 3 months to prepare.

You will find more info about 80m fox hunting at <http://www.ardf-r1.org>

If you require any further information please contact:

David GI4FUM gi4fum@qsl.net



On The Air

With Anthony O'Rourke EI2HY

Anthony O'Rourke EI2HY,
13 Hazel Road, Togher, Cork
ei2hy@iol.ie

Welcome to another On The Air column.

This issue finds the HF bands still in good shape even though **10m** is starting to show a slow decline in terms of openings and direction of openings.

Solar figures for February hit double digits for most of the month but overall some excellent DX was worked from EI and I'm pleased to be able to bring you every issue, hopefully, plenty of reports of QSO's on the RTTY keyboarding mode!

Band Reports

Plenty of DX to report on and we start off with a surprise trip to Johnston Atoll (KH3) by seasoned veterans Martii Lane (OH2BH), fellow Finn, Pertti OH2PM and Bernie McClenny (W3UR), publisher of The Daily DX Newsletter.

The call used was AH3D which is Martii's US callsign that he's held for a while. The opportunity came about as a result of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permanently closing down a chemical weapons disposal facility on the Atoll (see Aug/Sept 2002 Echo Ireland).

When this cleaning up is finished control of the Atoll is expected to be handed over to the US Fish and Wildlife Service which normally restricts access to it's domain tightly so this could well have been the chance to work KH3 for a long while.

The group finished up with 28,808 contacts after six days of operating and I was certainly very pleased to work them on **20m** Phone for DXCC #319.

Just after the team left V73HT Bob and V73GOD Bert, managed to keep the club station KJ6BZ on air for a few days before finally closing down and dismantling everything.

Staying in that region another US controlled Pacific facility Midway Island once more was briefly on air courtesy of Bill, KH4/NH6D, making a maintenance trip there and cards go to N6FF.

Also making a surprise appearance on the bands TI9MOT (Cocos Island) was Mauricio, normally TI6MOT, who was working for the Red Cross providing medical assistance for workers building a hydroelectric project on the island.

Staying in the Pacific Jan, KF4TUG, and Mike, KM9D, seem reluctant to leave Central Kiribati where they have been active as T31MY for well over four weeks now as part of their sailing trip around the Pacific hi!

With focus once more on the Persian Gulf region there was plenty of operation from the club station in Baghdad, YI1BGD, with OM2DX at the helm. This op was originally QRV as YI9OM from the Slovak Embassy in Baghdad which is now closed down and cards for this operation only go to OM3JW.

Fellow Slovakian OM3CGN kept DX'ers on their toes by coming on from the ITU Headquarters' station 4U1ITU in Geneva at odd intervals over the past couple of weeks.

There seemed to be a mass exodus by German operators from the winter storms back home as a good number of the more active DXpeditions were by German led teams.

Starting off in the warmer climes of the Caribbean we had DM2AYO and DL7CM coming on from Haiti as HH6/ home calls from Jan 30 to Feb 15 and interestingly for us IOTA chasers they were on from Ile a Vache which counts as NA-149 (Haitian Coastal Islands). Moving southwards to Trinidad and Tobago 9Y4/DL6RAI was active on all the major modes CW, SSB and RTTY.

While still travelling south ZY0T was another surprise DX trip, this time from Trindade and Martim Vaz Islands (SA-010) by PY1ON and just to wrap up the PY0's, Joaquim PS7JN has announced plans to be QRV again from St Peter and St Paul Archipelago (PY0S) during the first part of April using maybe the same call as previous years ZY0SAT.

Lots of IOTA activity over the past few weeks with among the more notable: Tom, W0GLG, who came on for a few hours during March 3rd as W0GLG/HR3 from the rare Cochinis Cayo Island (NA-160).

Members of the Southern Cross DX Group had the help of the Chilean Navy to help them put Quiriquina Island (SA-

070) on as 3G5Q and staying very local well known WAI "Square Basher" Declan EI9HQ and island hopper Sean EI4GK kept the masses happy by coming on from Inishmore Island, one of the Aran Islands and EU-006 for IOTA over the weekend of Mar 1-2.

The welcome activity from Mexico's IOTA enthusiasts kept rolling on with XF1K coming on from NA-167 and Joel, F5PAC, seems intent on putting all of Panama's IOTA numbers on air and so far has been QRV from NA-088 ,NA-170 and NA-202 as HP#/F5PAC.

Back to Europe and braving the freezing temperature we had RX3AJL/1 from EU-147 and also north of the Artic Circle was JW1I on Bear Island, EU-027 Two new reference numbers were handed out courtesy of Bernhard, DL2GAC/H44MS, coming on first from Kilinailau Islands (OC-256/pr) and then from Nuguria Islands (OC-257/pr) in the Papua New Guinea chain as P29VMS. Needless to say with both operations been powered by a car battery charged by solar panels signals were very weak. Also doing a "Double Activation", but this time from Africa, Reinhard DL6DQW, came on first from AF-088 between Feb 21-24 before moving onto AF-061 from Feb 25-Mar 3 as C98RF with quite a good signal on **15m** during his active hours.

Another German activation in Africa was by Babs DL7AFS and Lot DJ7ZG who were very popular as 5X1DC from Uganda. They caused a few raised eyebrows when they said they were operating from the "Sese Islands". My limited geography of Africa (hi!) told me that Uganda is land locked and a quick check of the atlas told me that indeed they were on from the Sese Islands but these Islands lie on the North Western side of Lake Victoria so panic over!

Neighbouring Sudan (ST) saw plenty of activity with PA5NT Gerben, just finishing up as ST2X

As I need Sudan for a new band country on **10m**, I thought I'd have to wait until the German team came on as STORY

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

(see last issue) but got a pleasant surprise on the afternoon of Feb 22 when I heard Dr Nadir, ST2NH calling CQ. A long QSO took place and then he passed it over to his daughter Reem who holds the call ST2YL. Having waited so long to work Sudan on **10m** it was a case of when it rains it pours.....hi!

Fans of the game cricket (and who isn't) had a chance to work special event station ZS03CWC operating from Cape Town for the Cricket World Cup and cards go to ZS1AU.

S07V was DK2WV while Peter G3WQU, who was active from Western Sahara as S07PM and from Morocco (CN) has gone QRT from both and is now heading for East Timor (4W) so expect lots of activity from there soon!

Data Modes

The purchase of a Rigblaster Plus interface unit, which goes between the soundcard of a PC and radio has lead me to experiment with some keyboard modes, primarily RTTY so now I'll be able to give a brief report on activity from the Digital modes.

As I didn't receive any other band reports here's a taste of what was workable on RTTY from EI during February and March.

We start off on **10m** where despite low signals the following stations graced the screen: 4Z4DX, 9G5GA, 9M2/G4ZFE, 9M2TO, A71EM, CN8LI, D44AC, EA9CD, FR5GS, HH6/DM2AYO, HR1RMG, JY9NX, OD5/OK1MU, PJ7/W1CX, SV9/LA4XFA, TA7AO, TI5N, UN5J, V31GW and also from Belize V31YN.

Dropping down to **15m** there were slimmer pickings but amongst them were: 4J9NM, 4K6DI, 8P9NX, 9Y4/DL6RAI, CM2IZ, EZ8YL, HP1/DJ7AA, PZ5RA, XF1K, and finally YB0JIV.

I didn't spend too much time with RTTY on **20m** but did manage to "connect" with: 5X1DX, JW0HU, OD5/OK1MU, RN2FB, TF3GC and XE1V, not a bad introduction to RTTY and it'll keep me happy chasing DXCC again whilst waiting for the new ones.

Up And Coming

Well underway (and maybe finished!)

Arquipélago de São Pedro e São Paulo - BRASIL
St. Peter and St. Paul Archipelago - BRAZIL

Lat/Lon
0°55'N
29°20'W
Locator
HJ50hw

ZY0SAT

ITU ZONE 13
CQ ZONE 11
IOTA SA-014
DFB OC-01
DIB 03

Confirming QSO/report with:

Radio/SWL	Date	UTC	MHz	2way	RST
EI2HY	08/MAR/2002	00:31	14	SSB	59

Joaquim das Virgens Neto
Rua Carlos Serrano, 1969
CEP:59076-740 - Natal RN

TNX QSL

Vy 73, Joca - PS7JN

by the time you read this is the trip to our newest DXCC Entity Ducie Island (OC-182), the call sign wasn't announced until the actual start of the operation to avoid it being pirated and despite rumours of it going to be VP6DI2 (yes, that's a number two at the end!) the team came on March 9th using the call VP6DIA (maybe standing for Ducie Island Again? Hi!). This time around the QSL route is JR2KDN.

The all Dutch team of the Low Land DX Team give up their usual place in the sunny Caribbean by going north to the Faeroe Islands between Mar 24-Apr 3 including an entry in the CQ WW WPX Contest with the call OY8PA being used during the contest and for 160/80m. Also joining them will be GM4FDM and AK0A who was part of the TI9M and will provide most of the operation on RTTY.

Individual calls issued to the team are: OY7ET/PA5ET, OY7QA/PA3FQA, OY7TW/GM4FDM, OY7WB/AK0A and OY7WP/PA3EWP. QSL all calls to PA5ET.

Christmas Island (OC-002) will be on air from April 7-21 by Steve, VK3SIX, using the call VK9XI and as his home call suggests it'll be a mainly **6m** operation.

Staying with small Islands Thomas VK3ZZ and friends have plans to put a new one on air in the form of Waldegrove Island East, part of the unnumbered South Australia State West Centre group using a special call VI5WCP from April 17-22. All this to celebrate the naming of the Island by Matthew Flin-

ders during his coastal mapping trip way back in 1802/03.

Well known DXpeditioner Hranne YT1AD of 3V8BB and K1B fame will head up a team heading for Western Sahara (S0) scheduled to happen April 16-22, no call announced yet.

One of the more active DX'ers from Israel is Dov, 4Z4DX, who heads out to Nepal to be the DX from April 22 to May 15 while visiting his son Mat, who holds the call 4Z5DX and plans to use the call 9N7DX. Still active from Nepal if you need it is Hugo, LA5YJ, on air as 9N7YJ.

No less than two separate trips are planned for the rare Brazilian IOTA Group SA-042, this group has been worked by less than 10% of IOTA participants and will be eagerly awaited! First off will be ZY8C from Caviana Island who will take part in the CQ WW WPX SSB Contest at the end of March. Look out for them between Mar 27-Apr 3.

Next up is a joint venture between the Brazil DX Net and the Portuguese DX Group who'll be on Mexiana Island which also counts as SA-042 from May 21-25.

After heading to Mongolia (JT) for the past three years in a row Italian DXers Nicola I0SNY, and Gianni I8KGZ, will this May head for neighbouring China from May 6-29, no call sign has been given yet.

Ulli, DL2AH, heads for Samoa (5W) for

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

two separate trips in July, the first from July 2-15 and the return trip July 24-29, plans are to travel to American Samoa (KH8) between the two dates mentioned.

Also heading for Samoa are a group calling themselves the "Worldwide Young Contesters" heading out there from Aug 4-14.

With the ZL7C cards now been fully answered (at least the direct ones!) Ken, ZL4HU, is planning a little trip to the ultra rare Pukapuka Atoll (OC-098) part of the North Cook Islands, no dates have been finalised yet.

One for the VHF'ers will be Frank, DL8YHR, who will be heading to Mauritania (5T) between Jun 28-Jul 7 for primarily on **2m** EME and **6m** from the shack of 5T5SN.

Also heading to West Africa to operate from Senegal is John, F5VHQ, with the call 6W/F5VHQ.

Prefix hunters should look out for a new prefix from Taiwan (BV) as they're now issuing BU as a new one, up and running already is BU2/JJ1TBB on from Taipei.

Look out for CB5A to be used from Chile during the CQ WPX at the end of March by Ferdi, XQ5SM.

Celtic Connections Weekend

With us EI's having our own Activity Day(s) around St. Patrick's Day every year here's an interesting Activity Weekend which also will apply to us! The GMDXG in Scotland have announced plans for a "Celtic Connections" weekend to take place over April 19-20 this year (every third weekend in April from then on) and the aim is to promote contacts between the parts of Europe and North America which have links with the Celts.

These include regions of Portugal (CT), Spain (EA1 regions), all of EI, parts of Brittany in France (F), Cornwall area of England (G), all of Scotland (GM) and Wales (GW) and Nova Scotia in Canada (VE1) check out the web site at www.gmdx.org.uk

Another possible DXCC?

Here's an interesting story which might lead to a new one for hungry DX'ers out there waiting for a new one.

At the start of February lawmakers in Yugoslavia (YU) which itself broke up

to give us 9A, S5 and Z3 etc formally abolished Yugoslavia and replaced it with a "loose" union of it's two remaining Republics Serbia and Montenegro, so now by law the name of the country is Serbia and Montenegro.

I assume the ARRL will change the DXCC Entities list to reflect this but it wouldn't automatically mean a new DXCC just yet.

Apparently if hams in both Republics go off and form separate Societies and both formally applied to the IARU then if successful, we'd have two separate Entities. As this agreement only seems to bind the two states for three years anyway it seems likely that we will get two new DXCC's either in less than a year's time (it'll take six months for the IARU to approve membership of a new society if both the Amateurs in Serbia and Montenegro decide to form separate societies) or we wait until they both go their separate ways and be recognised as two independent Republics.

Finally if you moan a bit about the bureau been slow, the IRTS not doing much for you, spare a thought for the Hams in Colombia (HK) who, with their National Society the LCRA facing dwindling membership with only 200 paid up members and US\$8,000 of debt, have dissolved the IARU Member Society which means no more Bureau as it was costing members 13 cents per CARD to send "via buro".

A nice thought to remember next time you send off a huge pile of cards to Hugh, EI2HI, and enclose nothing more than your membership label from the envelope Echo Ireland comes in !

During a QSO with HK6DOS on RTTY he told me that even now hams in Colombia have generally stopped calling CQ and are now just tuning for DX and not working pile-ups as with no bureau the cards end up in limbo, a sobering thought.

That's it for this issue, keep those reports (!) coming in, my thanks to the Daily DX as always, keep listening.

Anthony EI2HY

*Just as we go to the printers we hear that the Colombian National Society have decided not to dissolve after all so we still have a bureau for HK.

Reading the Mail

By

Michael McNamara, EI2CL

Welcome to compilation #23 of "Reading the Mail" – an account of IRTS QSL Bureau activity from 1 January to 5 March 2003.

During the time small packets of cards (less than 1 kilo) came from AFVL Liechtenstein, KARL, LABRE (SC), LRMD Lithuania, NARG Georgia, NZART, OVSV Austria, SARL and W2ORA.

After a four-week period when I thought EI had fallen of the lists, much larger parcels came from Box 599 Moscow, CRC, SSA and SRAL (1 - 2 kilos each), ARRL and URE (5 kilos each) and RSGB (10 kilos).

While sorting the cards the following were noticed and thought worthy of mention:

BY1DX, D90CCKD, DS17EXX/3, DS17GOO, E20KIR, E41/OK1DTP, GB50, GB100GM, GQ0000, LY750TG, OH2CL, TG0R, VU2MKP (50Mhz), W2OO, WY2000, 3W2XK, 5V7A, 6K17BYF/2, 6M0MM, and 9G5ZW.

Still very obvious was the large number of cards reflecting activity on 50MHz with the USA and many countries of Europe.

As well as cards from the many USA, Finnish, Russian and Swedish islands, for island chasers the following were noticed:

CE0Z/OH2NSM, D44TA (50MHz), D68C, DS5XEH/4, FP/N8KR, GM3BQA/P, GM0VIV/P, GQ4CHX/P, GT3FLH, HL0C/2, HL0C/4, HL0O/4, HL0O/5, T33R, T88ZZ, VK9CXF, VP6BR, VP8DEF, VU2PAI, VU2SBJ, XF3/AB5EB, ZD9IR, ZL75, ZM75AA, 3B6RF, 4H2B, 5R8GQ, 5X1GS and 6N0YO/4.

Congratulations to all concerned.

For now, all best wishes and lots of good DX.

Michael McNamara, EI2CL.

Club Roundup

Cork Radio Club

Cork Radio Club held their A.G.M. on Monday 10th March 2003.

A large attendance reviewed a busy year gone by and plans for the next twelve months were discussed.

The new committee is as follows:

Chairman	Jeremy EI5GM
Secretary	Stephen EI6JA
Treasurer	Dick EI6HH

Committee members are:

Finbarr EI1CS, Aedan EI3EG, Vincent EI7HN and Brian SWL.

Members of CRC together with East Cork and Kinsale Club members operated the Old Head Lighthouse last August for the lighthouse on the air week end. It was a very successful outing with over 2,000 QSOs being made.

Special thanks to Declan EI9HQ for travelling for the event and to Irish Lights for permission to operate.

EI2CRC operated in the SSB Field Day but antenna problems slightly spoiled the effort.

The Club purchased a new HF rig during the year and Anatoly EI4JF has been very active on the Yaesu FT-920 on 20m CW during club nights on Mondays in Wilton Park House.

Ingo DH5ST has again been with club over the past few months and has been very active and has worked over 1600 QSOs as EI/DH5ST. Unfortunately Ingo will be leaving Cork shortly and the club would like to wish him well in his new career.

South Dublin Radio Club Annual General Meeting

The SDR Annual General Meeting took place on 25th February.

The meeting was well attended, and members took the opportunity to have a wide ranging discussion on the direction of the club.

Plans were agreed for a number of events over the next few months, including outdoor activities and this year's IOTA contest.

The Committee elected for 2003-2004 was as follows:

Chairman :	Tom McGrath, EI7HT
Secretary:	Mark Boothman, EI9IB
Treasurer:	Mark Condon, EI6JK

Other committee members:

Peter Morrison, EI9ES
Daniel Cussen, EI9FHB
Kyle O'Connell, EI9FGB
Tony Byrne, EI9FLB

An Afternoon With Declan Craig EI6FR.

The Mayo Radio Experimenters Network is pleased to announce that on Sunday April 13 the group will host '

An Afternoon With Declan Craig EI6FR,

commencing at 2.30pm.

The event will take place in the Linenhall Arts Centre, Linenhall Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

The afternoon will commence with a short introduction to the hobby presented by John Corless, EI7IQ, followed by the main event, where Declan will give an insight on life at the other end of the pile-up as a rare one is activated.

The event is open to all, and admission is free. After the presentation, one of the many DXpedition videos featuring Declan, will be shown on the large screen in the Centre which can seat 150 people.

South Dublin Radio Club EI Activity Weekend

Members of South Dublin Radio Club were active for the three days of the St. Patrick's bank holiday weekend.

On Saturday, four SDR members were part of the team that helped to launch Summits On The Air in Ireland, as reported in our separate story on this event.

On Sunday, they were in Leitrim, near Bencroy, operating on 2 metres and HF, from early in the morning until the evening. The 2 metre rig was kept busy all day, but activity was a little slower on HF.

Having said that, the HF log for the day shows several pages of European contacts, and a few Africans.

Although the SDR team called Stateside a number of times, they had no luck in this direction.

On their return to Dublin, the SDR team were consoled by the news that many others had difficulty reaching the States on Sunday, due to poor propagation.

Another SDR team was out on Monday, St. Patrick's Day, this time in the Wicklow mountains, and again on 2 metres and HF. Propagation continued to be poor, with just one Stateside station in the log, in the middle of many Europeans.

Joe EI7GY

Shannon Basin Radio Club

Members of the Shannon Basin Radio Club were very active for the EI Activity Weekend.

Stations were operated on all the HF bands and despite poor conditions on the higher bands, everybody involved enjoyed the event.

Counties activated by club members included Longford, Westmeath, Roscommon, Leitrim and Galway

Activity on VHF centred on 145.350 MHz and was also quite busy. This frequency is always monitored in the midlands.

Limerick Rally 2003



Top: AN Other from ICOM UK presenting the ICOM IC E90 to raffle winner John Ronan EI7IG (on left).

Middle: Gwen and Peter Rodnell of Linear Amp UK.

Bottom: Mary Ann from Yaesu UK presenting the Yaesu Handheld to raffle winner Declan Horan, Ballincollig, Co Cork.

Limerick Radio Club would like to thank all those who attended their rally. It was a great success and all the traders were very happy. Planning has already started for next year and it would appear that Icom/Yaesu and Linear Amp will be there again. Negotiations have commenced with a large UK based company and they seem very keen to attend as well. Next year is looking even bigger and better.

ComReg and Internet Connection to Amateur Bands.

The following is a response from Dave Thom, broadcasting manager in the Commission for Telecommunication Regulation to a query on the status of internet connection to the amateur bands.

February 21st 2003

Dear Mr Moore,

ComReg is currently assessing an application from a Radio Club for a repeater which allows remote voice communications via the internet. Currently we have grave concerns about such technology and whether it is licensable under the Wireless Telegraphy (Experimenter's Licence) Regulations 2002 and these are outlined below;

- Primarily it should be noted that it does not meet the classical ITU Definition of the Amateur service or the definition contained in Regulation 3 of the Regulations as it does not involve 'self training' and investigation into Wireless Telegraphy i.e. 'radio technique'. Therefore it could be judged, that this is not a valid use of the allocated Amateur Bands and therefore undermines not only the unique position of the Amateur community internationally but the spirit in which the frequency bands were allocated.
- Use of such a system could be considered a breach of Regulations; 7, 12 (2), 12(3)e, 12 (3)f)i, 12(5) and could breach other Regulations of the Wireless Telegraphy (Experimenter's Licence) Regulations 2002, depending on the case in question.
-

In the meantime before coming to a definitive decision we intend to research the matter further and will let the applicant know in due course.

Regards

Dave Thom

Manager Broadcasting

Contest Calendar

April 2003

5/6th	1500-1500	SP DX Contest	CW/SSB
11/13th	2300-2300	JA International DX Contest	CW
12th	1500-1859	EU Spring Sprint	SSB
19th	1500-1859	EU Spring Sprint	CW
19/20th	1200-1200	GACW CW DX Contest	CW
19/20th	1200-1200	YU DX Contest	CW/SSB
21st	1400-1600	IRTS 2m Counties Contest	CW/SSB/FM
26/27th	1300-1300	Helvetia Contest	CW/SSB
26/27th	1200-1200	SP DX Contest	RTTY

May 2003

3rd	0001-2359	IPA Contest	CW
3/4th	0001-2359	Ten-Ten Int. Spring QSO Party	CW/RTTY
3/4th	2000-2000	ARI Int. DX Contest	CW/SSB
4/10th	0001-2359	Danish SSTV Contest	SSTV
4th	0001-2359	IPA Contest	SSB
10th	1700-2100	Fists Spring Sprint	CW
10/11th	2100-2100	CQ-M Int. DX Contest	CW/SSB
17/18th	1800-1800	The King of Spain Contest	CW
17/18th	2100-0200	Baltic Contest	CW/SSB
24/25th	0001-2359	CQ WW WPX Contest	CW

June 2003

7/8th	1500-1500	IARU Region 1 Field Day	CW
14/15th	0001-1600	WW South America CW Contest	CW
21/22	0001-2359	All Asian DX Contest	CW

Region 5 Annual Dinner March 14th 2003 Silversprings Hotel, Cork.



Photos by John Ketch EI2GN

Irish Radio Transmitters Society

Book Sales

Books, Maps, Logbooks, Badges etc.

S.A.E. to
Peter Grant, EI4HX, 37 Glenmore Park, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Telephone 042-9332641

Letters Page

Photograph in Jan/Feb Echo Ireland

Hi Dave,
Was delighted to get the recent issue of EI, it sure has come a long way from a single page paper produced on some Gestetner machine.

Was surprised to see my picture on the front page, it brought back very pleasant memories of my earlier days in ham radio and the IRTS. I do need to make a correction.

Since I left for the US in July 1956, after FD, with Sim Farrelly/EI9Y in a caravan parked in a farmers driveway near Balgriffin,

I have to think that that photo was at FD 1963 or 1964. Tom Burns callsign was EI9AH. Is the fellow on the left Paddy Daly, now EI6CP?

The car in the background LZCxxx was my Ford Anglia.....

Keep up all the good work in nurturing the growth of IRTS, it has made great strides since 1965 when we left for the US. On arrival in US badgered the Irish Embassy here in Washington to arrange reciprocal licensing between US and EI, eventually they passed the necessary legalese and I got on the air within a few days of the signing as W4/EI4AG, now it would be EI4AG/W4. Several years later became an American citizen and got WD4MIS from the FCC.

We keep the call EI4AG warm by operating 2m when we go home a couple of times a year. Should be in EI July and August this year.

73's John/WD4MIS/EI4AG
wd4mis@arrl.net

Dear Dave,
I would like to amend the photo as follows:

The ham in his shirt sleeves on the left of Vic EI7E is named Brennan and I think the young lad on the extreme left (as you look at the photo) is Brendan Daly EI4BB.

Yours Sincerely
Con VK6PM/EI7ID



Packet Radio in EI

Some more information from John Lofthouse EI3DIB

Dear Editor,

I feel obliged to make some comments on the Article by Dave Court EI3IO in the Jan/Feb issue of Echo Ireland.

Arriving in Ireland from the UK with my Irish born wife back in 1987, she was not exactly pleased as one of the first objectives I had was to get the Antennas set up and the old Commodore 128 with packet modem attached established in a spare corner, in order to let friends left behind know that I was now established and the Wang labs BBS in Limerick was my new home BBS.

I have over the years provided input to Echo Ireland as it now is on the subject of packet and one of my early offerings was a series on the workings and requirements of packet to get readers at least some way interested, I can not say if this prompted the Waterford group or not but I was approached by them and gave help and advice when Andy EI2HH Decided to establish the first Waterford BBS also using an old Commodore 128 and between us we forged new paths to the UK, this was of course Pre Cluster networks in EI and also Pre Internet for the populace.

Since that time when using an old Commodore I have Run TIPBBS EI3DIB from my Home in Ardfinnan and although today it is running on a Pentium PC using BPQ/FBB Software, it is still active and in fact is now the ONLY active BBS in the south, and along with the 3 Waterford Nodes forms a very active part of the local packet network. Internet may have taken many from packet but I am still here.

Dave States in his Article "The Network currently Comprises" then lists what he obviously considers to be the available network and from his location that may be the case but may I point out that Packet networks Extend far beyond the range of the stations normal working area and in fact packet is not only active in South Tipperary but to say the Cork node on 439.875 in practice ONLY provides a link to Waterford is completely untrue TIPBBS and the TIP21 Nodes are

available from ARRA on 4 Meters Via CAHIR (EI2IT) although currently in Digipeater mode as Tommy has TNC Problems, I am also available from the WRC2 Node at Helvic, the WRC8 Node on Mt Leinster and the Cork Nodes or direct on all frequencies below if a station is within radio range, my user list is growing of late yet not a mention of any of this in Dave's list at all, given the number of years my system has provide this service I am left wondering where his information was obtained?

I run with 3 Node ports as TIP21/EI3DIB-8 and of course TIPBBS/EI3DIB.

Telnet links previously available through WITIP are undergoing tests once more and we are working to improve them as I write.

TIPBBS/TIP21 frequencies are: 70.325 (4Mtr) / 144.850 (2Mtr) and 432.650 to Mt Leinster which although it had been off air for many months, was re-instated on Saturday the 15th February once again providing links To Kells and Dublin, thanks to John EI8JA and Nicky EI3JB who must have been half frozen given the WX up their.

Dave lists the advantages of packet but unfortunately he then specifies CLUSTER which is obviously the main interest for him, may I take this opportunity to point out that this BBS has much to offer the normal AX25 Non Cluster users and has available some hundreds of files ranging from Radio modifications and useful programme files to pictures and a Variety of Sound files. I am always open to suggestions from users as to things they may like made available and would be happy to locate and include anything that is within the law to so do, just added is the LATEST Echo-link installation software check the USER\UTILITY Directory.

Cluster may be of interest to many but I do feel that as its main purpose is to list DX spots then its advantage has to be mainly for the HF - A- class licensee who are not the only Radio experimenters in Ireland and that to overlook this can lead to some - B- Licensees think-

ing there is little for them on packet which is far from the truth.

There are many other under used facilities on the BBS.

F on connection will enter the facilities Menu and here you can read data if available for any user who has given it. This can contain an address and even phone number but is subject to the limits imposed by each individual.

There is also the facility to convert any Map reference Lat/Long to a Locator and given 2 such it will also provide the bearing and distance between.

For Satellite trackers there are Automatic Keplarrian updates via the packet Network and the system can provide Times, Elevation bearing and Distance for any user who logs in.

A BBS can provide much more than just messages of either personal or bulletin type but it is ultimately the user who is required to provide some input for the Sysop to know what is required as we are not mind readers.

I have said this before and will repeat it again PACKET is RADIO and requires we have a licence and I am proud of that.

Internet is for anyone with enough cash to buy a PC with Modem, No Licence required.

On connection to this BBS and after entering some data in order that the BBS can treat you in a more human and personal way the User will get a list of Command prompts:

EI3DIB Port # B,C,D,F,H,I,K,KM,L,LM,O,R,RN,S,TH,T,V

L List and R# followed by B Bye are used 99.9% of the time, all the rest have a purpose, C for conferencing T to call Me, TH for the themes Area, check them out and you may be surprised at just how much is available on a BBS.

TIPBBS and the TIP21 Node system is presently exchanging mail in real time with GB7CRV in the UK. Thanks to John EI7IG the Telnet facility WITIP is once again operational, the Waterford Node WRC2 is healthy and operational and WRC8 is back on Mt Leinster using

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

a simple folded dipole I donated, which is proving to be very reliable, the Waterford Packet BBS may have closed as has the Cork BBS but TIPBBS is still very much alive and available to anyone who cares to check in, 24 Hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year, ESB and other such breakdowns excepted, yet it will eventually close if its users are reduced to just myself and no one else knows it exists, so check in and take a look before falling numbers and lack of interest see me close down. For I also have the Internet.

If you have no use for that old TNC then next rally bring it along and let someone else explore the workings of packet, why let it gather dust? When it could be put to good use.

John EI3DIB:

Sysop: TIPBBS and TIP21 Node system, fully operational since 1989.

EI0TEN 28 MHz Beacon

Because of repeated reliability problems with EI0TEN at its present location, the beacon is to be moved shortly.

Service interruptions will continue for the next 3 weeks or so. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

The new location is also beside the sea and should hopefully result in an equally good signal and vastly improved reliability.

For further information, e-mail details are on the news page of the IRTS website.

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group

A new Alinco repeater is currently in operation on a trial basis at the repeater site on Mt. Leinster.

The repeater was put in place on Sunday the 2nd of March last by John EI8JA and Eoin EI7FXB and performance so far has been good.

Reports are welcome.

Please send reports to EI8JA or e-mail the club. E-mail details are on the news page of the IRTS website.



The Joys and hardships of Amateur Radio

By Ger Kenneally EI8HT

I'm sitting here on the balcony of our four star hotel The Argana in Agadir, Morocco enjoying a week's winter break and of course I'm thinking about everyone back home, but as they say in Cork "YOU ARE YA!" .

The boss (Noreen) is down by the pool with all those nice Europeans - you know the ones who put their towels out the night before.

I'm not a mad dog or an English man, so I'm in the shade trying to put a little something together for the Newsletter.

And what have I got to waffle about? Thinking to myself and trying to concentrate as another blonde bombshell (Martina from West Cork) goes by with next to nothing on, what jumps into my mind? "ECHOLINK", again as they say in Cork, "IT DID YA!"

No, honestly I've been playing with Echolink over the last few weeks and I'm still wondering if I'm impressed with it or not? To me there are certain sections of it that have absolutely nothing to do with amateur radio - a bit like net meeting in the sense that you scroll down the lower half of all the call signs listed on your screen, (they look like a blue headed man) until you spot a call sign that you might want to work, then you click on or highlight their call and Bob's your uncle.

Is this amateur radio?

Now if you have a look at the top end of the calls listed you will see "-L" and here is where you connect to a repeater via the internet. Your CQ call is then transmitted out over the airwaves via 2m or 70cm. This could in my opinion be classed as amateur radio; well you are, as stated, connecting to a repeater be it by the net.

One of the questions I would like to ask is say we are working through a VK***, should we be signing VK/EI. ?

I was very interested in the article in the last edition of Echo Ireland about wireless internet. Could we as licensed radio experimenters use, instead of the licence free radio board fitted to our computer, one that would work within the VHF/UHF bands?

Lets have look at East Cork. I know that I can work at least ten other's simplex from my QTH. And that's not including the lads in the city.

Now if say I was to get one of those all-in Internet connection jobbies for say €30 a month shared out between so many then it would not cost so much.

Is it worth looking at? Would we then

have a world-wide repeater? Would all the problems we have with QSB/QRM vanish? Will poor conditions disappear? Is it possible to install a computer with a connection on one of the existing repeater sites?

No, better disregard my last as straight away I can see lots of problems and they're not of a technical nature. Guess it's like when is it we can get so many so-called experts sitting down in the same room and actually agreeing on something so simple? Still it's something to think about.

As you will remember in the last edition I was thinking about buying a smart tuner and looking at the price of them from the UK (£300+ sterling) to me that's a lot of money invested in something mounted at the top of a pole in the golf club. Also the shape of the tuner, they are about 18 inch's by 12. Not easy to hide and we do need to hide it as we get some strange people walking around the golf course and they're not all golfers.

All is not lost though. I've got a 24v DC garage door motor and also a variable 0 to 50v DC power supply. With the voltage down to a few volts the speed of the motor is tailor made for turning the capacitor.

So now we'll have to go back to the drawing board and out with the books to see what size coil I'll have to form? Where to tap it? Shouldn't be too difficult as I've got loads of relays, and I'm only looking for something for top band and 80m.

Also it shouldn't be too difficult to hide if I use a few feet of black 4 inch sewer pipe. Still I'm open to suggestions and I'm willing to try anything within reason.

Better finish for now as you're one from West Cork keeps distracting me, also you'll never guess who is lying on the sun bed next to the XYL - it's only Anne Doyle the news reader from RTE and once again as they say in Cork "SHE'S JUST MASSIVE" (And that Cork expression has nothing to do with her size) Again I'm open to suggestions with regards to 160/80m. Please all suggestions in written form only for publication in Echo Ireland.

My best for now. I'm back to the real world tomorrow and I need to cool down so I'm off for one last dip in the pool.

De Ger EI8HT.



Summits On The Air

With Joe Ryan EI5FK

Background

My first experience of operating radios in the mountains was in the late 1980s, when I participated in an AREN exercise in support of the Lug Walk. That was before mobile phones were commonplace, and the provision of communications by radio experimenters was a vital part of the safety of such events. I very much enjoyed the challenge of getting together the required gear to operate well away from the comfort of the radio shack. This led to a number of outings on the Irish 'Munros' - mountains greater than 3,000 feet above sea level. Along with fellow members of South Dublin Radio Club, I activated Galtymore, Brandon, Carrauntoohill and Lugnaquilla during the 1990s.

Against that background, I was inevitably attracted to the Summits On The Air (SOTA) programme, which was launched in England just over a year ago.

By the time I became aware of it, separate regions had already been established in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, South Africa and The Isle of Man. I undertook the task of setting up a Republic of Ireland region, and was joined in this by Tom Rea EI2GP, Joe Fadden EI3IX and John Desmond EI7GL.

So What is SOTA?

SOTA is an international programme which exists in order to encourage Amateur Radio based activity from the summits of hills and mountains in countries around the world, and to provide an award system linked to this activity. The SOTA programme is intended to encourage activity from clearly defined peaks, including major mountains and lesser peaks.

An incremental scoring system recognises the higher peaks accordingly. SOTA does not accept operation from or in the immediate vicinity of motor vehicles.

The SOTA programme provides for participation by Activators who make QSOs from the Summits, Chasers who make contact with the Activators and Short Wave Listeners. There are rules for all categories of par-

ticipants. For example, Activators - the people who operate from the summits - must be "person powered" in their final access to the summit (valid methods include hiking, skiing, mountain biking), and all equipment must be carried to the site by the Activator team.

A minimum of four QSOs is needed to make a claim for activation, and each team member can claim an activation, provided he or she has the minimum of four QSOs from the summit.

Summits

Not every hill is a summit for SOTA purposes. The Irish SOTA Programme is based on the Marilyn's.

The Marilyn programme considers the relative height of summits compared to their surroundings and defines a minimum of 150 metre climb from the surrounding cols in order to qualify.

This results in 387 Summits in the Republic of Ireland, ranging from little more than 150 metres in height to over 1,000 metres.

The country has been divided into four Regions - Ireland North, Ireland South, Ireland East and Ireland West.

It is convenient to use the four main compass points to denote the regions, even though the location of the summits in the four regions does not necessarily correspond to the geographic north, south, east or west, respectively.

(Note that Northern Ireland has its own separate SOTA Association.)

The reference material for the Republic of Ireland is taken from the book "The Hewitts and Marilyn's of Ireland" compiled by E D "Clem" Clements (ISBN 0 9522680 8 6) published in 1997 by TACit Press.

Each summit has a reference number, consisting of two letters and three numbers. The Republic of Ireland reference numbers start with IN-, IS-, IE- and IW- for north, south, east and west, respectively. For example, Errigal Mountain in County Donegal is IN-001 and Djouce Mountain in Wicklow is IE-007.

Scoring System

Scores - which apply to a summit that is activated, worked or heard - are based on the height above sea level (ASL).

The following table summarises the scoring for the 387 EI summits:

Height ASL	Score	Summits
<300m	1	81
>=300m and <400m	2	93
>=400m and <500m	4	73
>=500m and <600m	6	47
>=600m and <700m	8	53
>=700m	10	40

There is a seasonal bonus of 3 points for Activators operating on summits >=500m during the period 1 December to 31 March, inclusive.

Awards

The SOTA programme has certificates and plaques, which are awarded to recognise achievement in the entire SOTA Programme, comprising all Associations.

Certificates are awarded for 100, 250 and 500 points.

Different certificates are awarded for Activators, Chasers and SWLs.

There is a "Mountain Goat" plaque for Activators who attain 1000 points, a "Shack Sloth" plaque for Chasers who attain 1000 points and an "SWL" plaque for Short Wave Listeners who attain 1000 points.

Endorsements are issued for attachment to the plaques for each increment of 200 beyond 1000 points.

SOTA is an Internet based programme, so claiming awards involves emailing a log (no QSLs needed) in a defined format to the programme organisers. We plan very soon to have awards specifically aimed at recognising activity on Irish summits.

The SOTA Reference Manual

This can be downloaded from the SOTA web site (see the list of links at the end of this article). It has the rules in detail, a list of the summits, their SOTA reference numbers and heights ASL.

It also has some notes on the summits, which are quite interesting.

Here's a sample from the Ireland West area:

"The Benchoona range, with Kylemore

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

Abbey at the base of Doughruagh, separates the Bens from Killary Fjord while to the east lies Devils Mother, the Partrys and Maumtrasna.

There are numerous isolated peaks throughout Connemara and Joyce Country too numerous to describe but, for so little effort to gain spectacular views; particularly worthy of mention are Benlevy (views of Loughs Mask, Corrib and Coolin), Lackavrea (views of the Corrib and surrounding mountains) and Tully Mountain (Sea Views)."

Tempting, isn't it? By the way, SOTA is not just for hardened mountain walkers: many of the peaks are only a short stroll from the road.

If you don't have easy access to the Internet and would like a copy of the reference manual, contact me at my call book address and I will forward a copy.

Frequencies

SOTA does not have any defined frequencies. Most activity is on 2 metres FM, often near the calling frequency. On HF, CW is the predominant mode, because of the need to operate QRP to keep the weight down.

Operation is generally around the QRP frequencies.

To date, with most SOTA activity being in the UK, 40 metres has been the most popular band. We can expect to hear more in the future on the higher frequency bands, as SOTA becomes more international.

Where to from here?

SOTA programmes are being developed in a number of other countries - Germany, Italy, Greece and the USA.

It's a way of promoting radio and fitness, and I hope that there will be a good level of activity from Activators, Chasers and SWLs in Ireland.

I have already had some enquiries from overseas participants about activating EI summits, so SOTA should add a little to our tourism business.

Useful Links

SOTA in the Republic of Ireland <http://www.qsl.net/sotaei/>

This is a site which I maintain, which includes the Reference Manual mentioned above and links to other relevant sites.

SOTA Programme <http://www.sota.org.uk/>

Here you will find the General Rules for the SOTA programme, pictures of recent activations, links to download the SOTA Reference Manuals for all participating SOTA programmes and scores to date by SOTA participants.

Summits Reflector: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/summits/>

Well worth joining - you can arrange to get daily emails about forthcoming activity.

TACit Tables <http://bubl.ac.uk/org/tacit/tables/>

Publishers of "The Hewitts and Marilyns of Ireland".

The Mountaineering Council of Ireland <http://www.mountaineering.ie/>
Useful information on mountain walking - access, safety etc.

Joe Ryan EI7GY

SOTA Launched on March 15th

Summits On The Air (SOTA) in Ireland got off to a good start on Saturday 15th March, helped by some of the best weather we have seen for many months. Tonlague, which is 817 metres above sea level was, we think the first Republic of Ireland SOTA on the air, activated by a team of six, which included Joe EI7GY (Association Manager for the Republic of Ireland) and Colin GI0RQK (Association Manager for Northern Ireland). The Tonlague operation was on HF and 2 metres. HF conditions were poor, and best DX on the day was Italy, on 15 metres CW. However, contacts on 2 metres were plentiful.

Charlie EI7HG was on Sorrel Hill, 599 metres above sea level, on Saturday, and he was out again on Sunday, operating from Kippure, 757 metres above sea level.

Joe EI7GY rounded off the bank holiday weekend by activating Fairy Castle in the Dublin mountains, on Monday 17th, on 2 metres FM.

No doubt there were other EI summits activated over the weekend, if so it would be great to hear about them.

Joe would like to thank everyone who helped him to launch SOTA in EI, he promises to be back on the hills again real soon.

Glengormely Electronic and Amateur Radio Society (GEARS)

Annual Quiz Night

GEARS, which is based in Glengormely, County Antrim, held its first Annual Table Quiz night on Friday 28th February. The quiz was well supported by local radio amateurs and their friends, and everyone agreed that it was a well organised and enjoyable event. A team from South Dublin Radio Club (which is twinned with GEARS) attended and, in a very close finish, the SDR members came out on top, finishing just two points ahead of their nearest rivals. So, SDR brought the Shield back to Dublin. The team representing SDR were Tom EI7HT, Mark EI9IB, Thos EI2JD, Daniel EI9FHB, Tony EI9FIB and Joe EI7GY.



Tom McGrath EI7HT (chairman of South Dublin Radio Club) being presented with the trophy by quizmaster Charlie Morrison GI4FUE

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Did you buy a Sangean Shortwave receiver, without the instruction book at the Limerick Rally ?
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